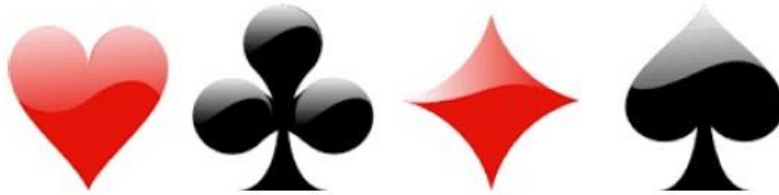


# *Table Talk*

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## **Editor's Musings - Memories of the May 2019 Burlington Sectional (Mark Oettinger)**

The Spring Vermont Sectional was held on May 17, 18 & 19, 2019. There were 2 separate pair games on Friday, two separate pair games on Saturday, a 1-session team game on Sunday morning for players with under 300 masterpoints, and a 2-session play-through team game on Sunday for players with over 300 masterpoints. Start times were 10:00 and 3:00, except for the Sunday open team game which resumed its afternoon session at 2:00 after a brief (and delicious) lunch which was offered by the sponsoring club (the Burlington Bridge Academy) for an extremely reasonable price of \$10.

Rutland native, Jim Thomas, directed, with his usual diplomacy, efficiency and humor. Total table count for the weekend was near 100, which is on the large size given recent history. I attribute the increase to all of the hard recruitment work for which we have Linda & Ken Kaleita, Don & Sheila Sharp, Jerry & Patti DiVincenzo, Mary Tierney,

and Mike Farrell (among others) to thank. There is an evident influx of new players, who were offered a half-price afternoon entry fee for any player with under 50 masterpoints who also played in the morning session of the same day.

A day or two before the event, Phil Sharpsteen got a call from Lloyd Arvedon, a player from Southern New Hampshire, who was coming up with a partner to play in the pairs events on Saturday, and who was looking for teammates for Sunday's team game. Arrangements were made for them to play with Wayne Hersey and Dick Tracy. I first played against Lloyd at a regional in Grossinger's, a now defunct resort in the Catskills, when he and I were both in college, albeit different ones, in the early 1970s. I was playing with Richard Pechter, a college classmate who had taught me the game, but I have no recollection of Lloyd's partner on that occasion. Lloyd, however, left an impression on me, and while I gave up the game for roughly 30 years, Lloyd stuck with it...accumulating over 33,000 masterpoints in the process, and presently ranking #35 in the world by masterpoint holding! Isn't it a remarkable characteristic of tournament bridge that, on any given day, a run-of-the-mill player can play against one of the world's best? Imagine playing tennis against Roger Federer, or golf against Tiger Woods. What a thrill!

### **Hand Evaluation (suggested for newer players) (Mark Oettinger)**

You pick up the following hand, sitting South as Dealer. Neither side is vulnerable:

♠ A Q 10 9 5 4

♥ K 8

♦ -

♣ K Q J 8 7

You have 15 HCPs. That's certainly a great start, but how else can we assess the overall potential of the hand? Let's consider some of the ways, and in the process, create an inventory of hand evaluation tools.

1. **High Card Points:** 15 HCP; 37.5% of the high cards in the deck; get into the habit of thinking about percentages...or "odds..." as they are useful in so many bridge contexts. The other three hands contain 25 HCP among them, so if partner has a third of those points, we have 23 HCP between us, giving us the clear majority of the HCPs, with being able to make game a very real possibility based on high cards alone. But...don't stop evaluating your hand once you have counted your points. HCPs are a *necessary*, but certainly not *sufficient*, hand evaluation tool. After all, as Marty Bergen cautions in several books of the same general name, *Points Schmoints!* Effective hand evaluation is an indispensable skill for becoming a competitive bridge player. That said, notwithstanding the limits of HCPs as a means of evaluating one's hand, I recommend that you *recount* you HCPs *at least once*, and that in doing so, you add them up "in a different direction" each time;

2. **Shape:** There's a LOT to like about this hand from the standpoint of shape! It is often said, "6-5, come alive!" Even more, the other suits are 2-0, as opposed to 1-1. Voids strongly advise "bidding one more," in the hope of becoming declarer. [See also Ingi's article on counting shortness and length *as points*, from the January 2019 issue of *Table Talk*.] Another tip: when you are valuing your hand, after your cards are sorted, make a particular note of your distribution. There are two

reasons for this. The first is to increase your familiarity with how 13 cards can be distributed among 4 suits. Those (most common) distributions, and their frequency, are as follows:

| Shape   | Frequency |
|---------|-----------|
| 4-4-3-2 | 21.55%    |
| 4-3-3-3 | 10.54 %   |
| 4-4-4-1 | 2.99%     |
| 5-3-3-2 | 15.52%    |
| 5-4-3-1 | 12.93%    |
| 5-4-2-2 | 10.60%    |
| 5-5-2-1 | 3.17%     |
| 5-4-4-0 | 1.24%     |
| 5-5-3-0 | 0.90%     |
| 6-3-2-2 | 5.64%     |
| 6-4-2-1 | 4.70%     |
| 6-3-3-1 | 3.45%     |
| 6-4-3-0 | 1.33%     |
| 6-5-1-1 | 0.71%     |
| 6-5-2-0 | 0.65%     |
| 6-6-1-0 | 0.07%     |
| 7-3-2-1 | 1.88%     |
| 7-2-2-2 | 0.51%     |
| 7-4-1-1 | 0.39%     |
| 7-4-2-0 | 0.36%     |
| 7-3-3-0 | 0.27%     |

|         |       |
|---------|-------|
| 7-5-1-0 | 0.11% |
| 7-6-0-0 | 0.01% |

The second reason for making note of your distribution is much more prosaic...and that is to make sure that you are not “missing a card.” Maybe a missing card is on the floor, or misplaced elsewhere. But chances are that you would have caught that when you counted your cards right after you removed them from the board, and before you looked at them. You do count your cards before you look at them, don’t you? If you don’t, and if it turns out that you didn’t have the right number, the director’s ruling will likely go against you. Often, the “missing” card will be lurking behind another card in your hand. After a little practice, a “4-4-2-2” hand will immediately strike a dissonant chord.

3. **Loser Count:** In my experience, the literature on loser count is sparse. From what I have read on the topic, the prevailing view is that, “One shouldn’t use loser count until *after* a fit has been found.” In my experience, loser count is a useful way to get further sense of the strength of the hand, even *before* you have found a fit. And when you have a self-sufficient suit, essentially, “a fit *has* been found.” In this hand, you do have a very nice Spade suit, but it’s not quite “self sufficient.” That said, the auction may yet disclose that you have a Spade fit, *or a Club fit*, setting the stage for a “fit-based” loser count analysis.

I always do a quick loser count, even before I find a fit (and sometimes I don’t find one at all), just to get another assessment of the potential playing strength of the hand. In this case, you only have *three* losers! That’s one loser less (i.e., one playing trick more) than a lot of 2C

openers! Put another way, 3 losers = 10 winners = Major suit game in hand. It's also an elegant illustration of how 15 HCP can sometimes play like 25 HCP...if it has enough shape and fit. *Points Schmoints* indeed!

Ingi adds: "I use loser count in a variety of situations, including: (1) to determine whether some distributional hands with few points merit opening; or (2) whether a 12 HCP hand is not worth opening; or (3) if I can "overbid" in opening 2C.

4. **The Master Suit:** You should always take notice of hands in which you have Spades...the "Master Suit." It is called that because it is the highest-ranking suit, and because of the advantage that gives you in the auction. You can always outbid the opponents in any suit bid at any given level of bidding...and therefore force the opponents to the next level if they choose to compete in another suit. This topic is a bit beyond the scope of this first "warm-up hand" of this issue of *Table Talk*, but suffice it to say, I assess this hand as a better hand than one in which the Major suits are reversed.

5. **Intermediates:** A 10, a 9, two 8s and a 7. These are highly significant cards, especially when they are adjacent, are located in your longer suits, and even more so when those suits contain the lion's share of your honor cards.

6. **Concentration (so-called "In and Out Evaluation"):** Your Spade and Club honors work together extremely nicely. The KQJ of Clubs are worth far more than if these three cards were distributed among two of three suits, rather than one. The 109 are touching, as are the 87. Note also that both of these intermediate card sequences are in

your long suits, both of which are long and honor-filled. The combination of length, high card concentration, and intermediate card concentration, add dramatically to the trick-taking potential of your hand. And your King of Hearts is protected against the opening lead, if (as is likely) you end up as declarer.

7. **Prime Values (Aces & Kings vs. Queens & Jacks):** Your honors are extremely “crisp.” Four “controls” (the Ace counts as 2 controls, and each King counts as 1 control). Even your Queens and your Jack are supported by other honors in each suit.

**Bottom line:** I don’t know when I’ve ever seen a nicer 15 HCP hand. I can’t see a single down side.

So...now that we have evaluated our hand in such painstaking detail, let’s see how the auction went:

|    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|
| N  | E  | S  | W  |
|    |    | 1♠ | 3♦ |
| 4♦ | 5♦ | 6♠ | P  |
| P  | P  |    |    |

My partner’s 4♦ bid showed Spade support and at least game-going values. The opponents did a great job making our lives difficult through their preempts, forcing us past Blackwood. I was therefore left to decide on slam without the benefit of my usual tool...Key Card Blackwood. I don’t have an outside Ace to cuebid, so I decided just to bid 6♠. If there’s a grand slam in this hand, I simply did not see how my partner and I (a relatively unpracticed partnership) could bid it after the opponents’ vigorous obstruction.

Ingi suggests: “You could cuebid 5♥, indicating a clear interest in slam, thereby inviting partner to join in the slam exploration. If partner responds 6♣, you could certainly bid 6♦, indicating an interest in the grand slam. All of this seems risk free to me.”

Mark again: The first cuebid with a King, and the second cuebid with void?! It’s Italian-style cuebidding, and I like it, but achieving this level of nuance requires thorough partnership discussion, and I am a believer in the adage that you should not bid a grand slam unless you can count 13 tricks. I am also reminded of the other adage that we should, “strive for the best contract *possible*, rather than the *best possible* contract.” Also, “better is the enemy of good.” Enough with the aphorisms; let’s get on with the play!

West leads the 7 of Hearts, dummy is tabled, and I am able to assess our combined resources:

♠ KJ73  
♥ Q10632  
♦ K  
♣ A106



♠ AQ10954  
♥ K8  
♦ -  
♣ KQJ87

Lead: ♥7




As it turns out, we do seem to be in the best possible contract. All we have to lose is the Ace of Hearts. What could possibly go wrong? Thinking back to the auction, the answer becomes clear. The lead could very well be a singleton. After all, West likely has 7 Diamonds for his 3♦ bid, leaving him with 6 remaining cards. As I read Ingi's frequency chart, above, there's about a 25% chance that the 7 of Hearts is indeed a singleton, and even if it's not, there's about a 40% chance that he has a void in a different suit. If (probably when) East wins the Ace of Hearts, he is likely to find the right switch. Is there anything I can do to "gin the works," or am I simply at the mercy of the dealing machine?

It should go without saying, but you should never play to Trick 1 without giving some thought to the hand. This is the only time that you will be able to give some unrushed thought to your line of play without giving away information to the opponents. So please do so now, before reading on.

Having started the round with 8 of 9 negative scores (with a very strong partner, and without having made any obvious mistakes thus far), I was perhaps a little frustrated. I called for a small Heart from the board, East played the expected Ace of Hearts, and I played small from my hand, not having given the big picture sufficient consideration. Back came a Heart. I followed with the King per force, and West ruffed. Down 1. Is there anything I could have done?

Yes! I should have thrown the King of Hearts from my hand at Trick 1! There is absolutely no down side, as I have 12 tricks as long as I don't get a Heart ruff. Let's look at the whole hand:

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>♠ KJ73<br/>♥ Q10632<br/>♦ K<br/>♣ A106</p>                                     |  | <p><b>Board 10</b></p>   |  |
| <p>♠ 2<br/>♥ 7<br/>♦ QJ876432<br/>♣ 532</p>                                       |  | <p><i>West</i>     <i>North</i>     <i>East</i>     <i>South</i></p> |  |
| <p>♠ AQ10954<br/>♥ K8<br/>♦ -<br/>♣ KQJ87</p>                                     |  | <p>1 ♠</p>   |  |
| <p>♠ 86<br/>♥ AJ954<br/>♦ A1095<br/>♣ 94</p>                                      |  | <p>3 ♦     4 ♦     4 ♠     All</p>                                   |  |
|  |  | <p>Pass</p>  |  |

Did you notice that West jumped to 3 ♦ with *eight* Diamonds rather than the usual seven? Some players will do that to compensate for a weaker than normal hand. How do you think that it impacted this auction? If East had jumped to 4 ♦ instead of 3 ♦, North would probably have bid 4 ♠; East might have still bid 5 ♦, and I would have still bid 6 ♠. If so, East's decision to limit himself to 3 ♦ would not have made a material difference in the auction.

But if East wins the Ace of Hearts at Trick 1, and if I had dropped the King of Hearts in tempo, East might have assumed that West had only seven Diamonds, and figured that it was safe to cash the Ace of Diamonds before leading a second Heart at Trick 3. As you can see, that would have spelled disaster for East/West, as I would have ruffed and had twelve tricks.

Final thought on defense: Note that East can see all the small Heart cards. The only Heart that's missing after I drop the King is the 8, and if West had that card, he would have led it, as opposed to the 7, as he

would have been starting a high-low. So...if East can trust West's leads, he knows to return a Heart at Trick 2, not risking that West has done precisely what he did here...bid 3 ♦ on an unusually weak hand and an 8-card suit.

And a note on sports psychology. I was upset with myself for not dropping the King of Hearts at Trick 1. Did it affect my play on the next hand? Probably not, but it could have. This brings up an important point...*you have to let your mistakes go*. What's gone is gone, and letting it affect your subsequent play is unforgivable. Often, your mistake ends up having no effect on your score, but even if it does, let it go! Partner deserves to have you play one hand at a time, not allowing one mistake to cause another one.

### **I like those odds! The basics of combining your chances (Ingi Agnarsson)**

Who doesn't like to increase their odds in life? And to combine good things, like having your cake and eating it too! In the "I like these odds!" series we've covered various aspects of probability calculation and play, but focused on things in isolation, such as how to play a particular combination, or what are the odds of finding success in finessing versus topping a suite. However, we've not yet touched on the concept of combining probabilities of more than a single event. You may for example ask, given two alternative ways of making your expertly bid slam, "should I make the diamond or the heart finesse?" Either gives me the slam, but if either fails, the opponents get to take that darn spade trick generated by their obviously lucky lead... How do you figure this out? By finding a way to combine your chances. Don't worry, there are no super complicated calculations—a lot of this stuff is fairly intuitive, and it's useful to understand the very basics.

So let's first look at how we add up probabilities correctly. Let's say you can make your contract by either making a successful finesse, or by your long trump suit breaking 1-1 as opposed to 2-0.

♠ A Q J 10 4 3 2

♥ A Q

♦ A K

♣ 3 2

♠ 9 8 7 6 5

♥ 8 6 4 2

♦ 5 3

♣ A K

You are in 6♠ and the lead is a club. You can see that there are only two vulnerabilities where you might lose a trick, ♠K and ♥K. If you can manage to lose to only one of them, you make your slam. We all know that, in general, that the probability of a finesse working is 50%. We also may know, from earlier installments of "I like these odds!", that when only 2 cards are missing they break 1-1 about 52% of the time and 2-0 (or 0-2) 48% of the time. Therefore, the best play in the trump suit is to top rather than finesse. So, we have two sets of probabilities – how do we combine them? It becomes immediately clear that simple addition does not work,  $50+52=102$ , and you are certainly not 102% certain to make your contract! But how likely are you? Let's look at the Heart finesse first. If that works you made your slam. However, in the 50% of cases when it does not, you make it when the ♠K falls under the ♠A. Therefore, the 1-1 break is only relevant in the 50% cases where the Heart finesse fails and in 52% of those cases you make it because the Spades break 1-1. Half of 52 is 26 and that therefore adds 26% to the

total probability of making your contract. Now you can add these up for the total:  $50+26=76\%$ . Note that just to make the calculations simpler I looked at the Heart finesse first, though any sane player would first start with playing trump to the Ace. But, of course, the calculations work both ways. Of the 48 cases where the Spades don't work, you make  $50\% = 24\%$ .  $52+24=76\%$ .

**Generally to combine odds take the remainder of the first case scenario and apply the odds of the second case scenario to only that remainder. Then combine.**

“I need either a 3-2 break in Spades or in Hearts to make my game”. 3-2 breaks happen 68% of the time. Combined odds? If the first suit fails, as it will in 32% of cases, you will still make 68% of these 32 (the remainder). 68% of 32 is 22 and thus your combined odds are 90%. Nice contract! Of course, you don't carry a calculator at bridge, but you can eyeball it. This example is roughly  $\frac{2}{3}$  of 32 which is a bit over 20

The same principle works identically if you had been playing  $7\spadesuit$  on the first hand (partner is an infamous over-bidder) and you needed BOTH finesses to work. You are down immediately if the spades are not 1-1 (48% of cases). But if they behave (52%) you still need the 50% Heart finesse to work, so only half of the 52 cases when the Spades behave allow you to make your ambitious grand slam for a combined probability of 26% (half of 52). In effect, here you are multiplying events so  $0.52 \times 0.5 = 0.26$ .

As a disclaimer—technically, in statistics—you can only multiply the probability of two events if they are completely independent, and there are times when the two events, such as finesse A and finesse B, may not

be completely independent. Furthermore, the odds of any given event, say, a finesse or a 33 break working, may change during play – but let's not worry about those factors here as they are far less important to understand, and less frequent and impactful, than the basics.

Let's look at a few examples:

♠ A Q 4 2

♥ 4 3

♦ 9 6 4 3

♣ A 9 4

♠ K 9 8 7

♥ A 9

♦ A Q

♣ K 8 7 6 5

You are in 3NT and, of course, with your typical luck, it looked like west had no idea what to lead but ended up closing his eyes and picking a Heart. Darn! On any other lead you would be able to play for the Clubs breaking and things would be looking great. Now, you don't have time for Clubs as the Heart suit is open. You have seven tricks and need the Spades to break 32 and the Diamond finesse to work. So, our odds are simply 50% of 68 (only 50% (finesse) of the 68% of hands where Spades break 32 win) for a total probability of 34%.

Your typically much luckier partner would of course have gotten a less devastating lead. She would have been able to check the Clubs and had a much better chance. How much better? Well let's do the math. There are still only seven top tricks but with time to test the Clubs it is sufficient for you that they break 32 to make 3N. That's 68%! Not only that, even if the clubs failed (32% of the time), she'd still have the options you

faced available, and would make the contract 34% of the remaining cases. This adds 11% ( $0.34 \times 0.32$  – you could have easily guessed the number hovered around 10 as a third of a third). Therefore, Partner would have made your game 79% of the time. Typical.

Let's consider what this says about opening leads. 1) they are very important, and 2) aggressive leads are often key to success. The opponents could easily lead a passive spade from some low cards they had, but the winning line was to lead from the KJxx in Hearts!

I digress... OK, so we have established how to combine the probabilities of two events – whether you need both, or either, of them to work. But, this does not seem to have any direct impact on your play. In the examples above, you would have played the same regardless of whether you knew how combine probabilities or not. So why bother learning this stuff? This is where combining your chances comes in. Here's another example:

♠ 5  
♥ 9876  
♦ AQ7654  
♣ 32

♠ AK6  
♥ AK2  
♦ K3  
♣ A9876

You are in 3NT and the lead is a small Spade to your ♠A. OK, let's assess. We have eight top tricks and the prospects seem good with the strong Diamond suit. You only need a 32 break in Diamonds to make (as we by now know = 68%). So, we proceed to play the ♦K and a small to the ♦A. Oh, no! West is out on the second Diamond and you don't get

any extra tricks from this strong Diamond suit. Too bad, next hand. Wait!! You forgot to combine your chances! Since you avoided a Club lead you can afford to play more 'slowly'. What else could you have done to secure the contract? Well, the contract also makes if you make one extra Heart trick – remember you only need one trick. For that to work the Hearts have to split 3-3 – a 36% chance. Its best to tackle the Hearts first, because if you first play diamonds and they don't work, you've lost your chance to combine your chances—there are no more entries to take the 4<sup>th</sup> Heart even if the suit breaks. Therefore, the best play on trick two is a small Heart! You win whatever the opponents lead back, now take your ♥AK, and only then play the Diamonds. Now you are in dummy in case the Hearts were 3-3 and still, of course, win if the Diamonds break. Now you are making your contract not only when the Diamonds break 3-2 (68%), but also when the Hearts are 3-3 (36%) for a combined probability of 68% + 36% of 3-2 (the remainder of the 68%) = 12% or an impressive 80% in total. Combining chances is a very important concept!

Another example where you have to choose one of two finesses to make:

♠ 843  
♥ Q1054  
♦ 102  
♣ AJ74

♠ 10  
♥ AKJ83  
♦ AKJ9  
♣ K106



You reach a good looking slam in 6♥. The defense takes a Spade trick and you ruff the Spade return. You take two rounds of trumps and they split. What is your plan to make 6? You have 10 tricks on top by ruffing two Spades in declarers hand (reverse dummy). Clearly, a successful finesse in clubs would do the trick, followed by a ruff in declarers hand for trick 12. And you can finesse either opponent, so, the slam certainly makes if you can sniff out the ♣Q. The pressure is on! There is also an additional option, a first round Diamond finesse (throwing two Clubs on high Diamonds). Which of the three finesses will you take? The apparently agonizing choice goes away when you decide instead to *combine your chances*. You combine chances in the two suits by taking the AK in one, and if the Q does not appear, finesse in the other. You get to make a finesse, and you combine that chance with the possibility that either opponent has a Q stiff or Qx in the suit you top. Which suit to top and which to finesse? Without any external information (such as a bid, or an informative lead from the opponents), you simply top the suit more likely to yield a singleton or doubleton Q. That's easy to determine, the suit you have a higher number of cards in. You have six Diamonds and you have seven Clubs, and thus the correct play is to take the ♣AK, and if the ♣Q does not appear, finesse Diamonds. This is a far better approach than simply guess the winning finesse. The probability of the Q falling when you have 7 cards combined is about 19%, and the diamond finesse is 50%. Combined = 19% + 50% of 81 (the remainder) = 59%.

Here is another example where you would like to combine chances in **three** suits:

♠ A 5 3  
♥ K 8 4 3  
♦ K 5 4 2  
♣ J 3

♠ K J 7 2  
♥ A Q  
♦ A J 8 3  
♣ A 10 5

You open a Diamond and respond to  $1\heartsuit$  by partner by jumping to  $2NT = 18-19$  HCP. Partner thinks for a second and then bids  $3NT$ . When he lays down his 11-point hand, he smugly remarks ‘this should have a play’. After W leads the  $\clubsuit K$ , however, your partners aplomb seems unjustified - we have got 30 points, in  $3NT$ , yet I’m at risk of going down! Was partners comment the kiss of death? Like directions followed by ‘you can’t miss it!’ There are only 8 top tricks. There are many different opportunities of getting the 9<sup>th</sup> trick: a Spade finesse, Hearts breaking 3-3, and a Diamond finesse. This is good in principle, but after the Club lead you don’t have the time to give yourself the best chance in each suit. Luckily though, you don’t need guesswork, you simply have to figure out the best way to combine chances. Clearly you can test the Heart suit without the risk of giving up a trick, so you start there. The Hearts break 4-2, now what? As in the last example, you now top the longer suit you have (Diamonds) and if still nothing good happens, take a second round Spade finesse. Odds:  $3-3 = 36\%$ , queen drop =  $33\%$  of 64 (the remainder) =  $21\%$ , second round finesse =  $51\%$  of 43 (the remainder after adding together the combined odds of the first two events) for an overall probability of success at  $79\%$ .

Even if the success of the extra chance has very low probability, you should still try. Say you need one of two finesses, but cannot afford to lose a trick. Even if you have to play for K stiff in one suit before finessing the other, it will add a little bit to your chance of success. Sure, you may go 2 down instead of 1 by trying to make your contract, but that's trivial compared to the game or slam bonus, especially in a team game. We'll take a few more examples in the next issue of *Table Talk* – and feel free to send in hands you think fall into the category of combined chances!

### **The New York City May 2019 Regional (Mark Oettinger)**

In recent years, I have found myself attending more large tournaments. After about 10 years back in the game, following a 30-year hiatus, I seem to be learning many of the subtleties that escaped me in my earlier years with the game. I read more. I play with, and against, better players. And frankly, producing *Table Talk* is a wonderful learning experience as well. Tournament bridge isn't cheap, but it's also not as expensive as some pastimes. When I have a nearby place to stay for free, it's a no-brainer. One of my regular partners, Ron Weiss, lives in Brooklyn, and houses me when we play in NYC together. Through this partnership, I have gotten into the habit of attending both of the annual NYC regionals, one at the end of May, and the other at the end of December. Our wives and kids are friends as well, so we sometimes combine bridge and spending leisure time together. And at other times, I have business in New York, which often includes a session at Honors Bridge Club.

During the May 2019 NYC regional, I flew down very early on Wednesday morning for a 10 a.m. non-bridge meeting at Grand Central.

Following that, Ron and I played in a single-session side game at Honors Bridge Club that afternoon. We then spent four days playing two-session events at the main tournament site, the New York Hilton Midtown. We had great fun, although we gave a lot away, especially over the last two days. Our highlight of the week was winning a Bracket 2 team game, after leading wire-to-wire. That was worth 10.26 gold points.

We played against ACBL *Bulletin* columnist Adam Parish in the final round of the team game that we won. At the outset of the last round, they stood second in the group, 15 victory points behind us. We beat them soundly. Adam was gracious, and we discussed possible collaboration. I also had a chance to ask Barry Rigal whether he has updated his materials on slam bidding...*How to Build a Better Mousetrap*. I had heard him give a lecture on the topic at Honors a couple of years before. I introduced the topic by raising the difference between 4NT after a *Jacoby* Transfer versus 4NT after a *Texas* Transfer. He eagerly rattled off his view of how the two sequences should be differentiated, and he gave me his email address, promising to find the latest version of his materials and send them to me.

The premier event of the May NYC regional is a two-day event known as the Goldman Pairs. The field is cut in half after a two-session Day 1, as only the top half of the field qualifies for the two-session Day 2 final. The event attracts the creme de la creme, and the list of winners (going all the way back to 1929), is a who's who of bridge over the past century. Well, guess what?! Lloyd Arvedon, playing with Glenn Robbins, led Session 1, fell to 4th after Session 2, regained the lead after Session 3, and never looked back, winning the event by a wide margin.

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## **The Law of Total Tricks (Mark Oettinger)**

The Law of Total Tricks (as known as The Law or LOTT) is a fundamental cornerstone of duplicate bridge. Its invention is generally credited to Jean-Rene Vernes of France in 1968. That said, it is Larry Cohen who has popularized it. His books *To Bid Or Not To Bid*, and *Following the Law* are required reading for any aspiring tournament player. How can one distill its principles into something short and usable? Allow me to capture a very simple side of it, and then to introduce the larger concept in such a manner that the motivated student can have a starting point for further research.

The simplest and most practical way to use The Law is this:

**We can safely bid to the “trick-level” equal to the combined number of trumps that we, as a partnership, hold.**

In other words, if we have 8 combined trumps, we should be safe at the 2-level (8 tricks). If we have 9 combined trumps, we should be safe at the 3-level (9 tricks). If we have 10 combined trumps, we should be safe at the 4-level (10 tricks). And so on.

When I say “safe,” I do not mean that we will necessarily make our contract. But, if we end up going down, it is likely that our opponents would have earned a better score by declaring the contract to which they had committed before our last bid. In other words, if we, on the strength

of our 9-card Heart fit, bid to 3♥ over the 2♠ bid of the opponents, and we go down 1 (vulnerable) for -100, then chances are that the opponents would have made 2♠, giving us a -110 instead. So...the 3♥ bid turns out to have been a good “sacrifice.” Here’s the more precise representation of The Law:

**The combined number of tricks available, to the two sides, on a particular deal, is equal to the combined number of trumps that they hold in their respective best trump suits.**

So, if we have a 9-card Heart fit, and the opponents have a 9-card Spade fit, we and they should be able to make 18 (9+9) total tricks. How those tricks will divide is a function of where particular cards are located. If a particular finesse lies favorably for us, it will gain us a trick whether we are declaring or defending.

The Law allows us to project the following

Chart for 18 trumps; Neither Side Vulnerable

| We Play 3♠      |           | They Play 3♥      |           |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|
| Our # of tricks | Our Score | Their # of tricks | Our Score |
| 11              | +200      | 7                 | +100      |
| 10              | +170      | 8                 | +50       |
| 9               | +140      | 9                 | -140      |
| 8               | -50       | 10                | -170      |
| 7               | -100      | 11                | -200      |

We can see from the table above that our score is improved by competing to 3♠ no matter what the trick distribution.

Let's look at an illustrative hand:

|             |              |           |
|-------------|--------------|-----------|
|             | ♠ K Q J 10 4 |           |
|             | ♥ 5 4        |           |
|             | ♦ A Q 6      |           |
|             | ♣ Q 6 4      |           |
| ♠ 8         |              | ♠ 7 6 5   |
| ♥ A K 9 6 3 |              | ♥ Q J 8 2 |
| ♦ K 5 3     |              | ♦ J 8 7 2 |
| ♣ K 9 8 3   |              | ♣ J 10    |
|             | ♠ A 9 3 2    |           |
|             | ♥ 10 7       |           |
|             | ♦ 10 9 4     |           |
|             | ♣ A 7 5 2    |           |

As presented, the above hands make 3♥ East/West (9 tricks; -140 to us) and 3♠ North/South (9 tricks; +140 to us). If we exchange the King of Diamonds in the West hand for one of the small Diamonds in the East hand, North/South go down 1 in 3♠ (8 tricks; -50 to us) and East/West make an overtrick in 3♥ (10 tricks; -170 to us). The total number of tricks (18, the same as the combined number of trumps) remains constant, and we get a better score by bidding to our number of trumps, regardless of how the winning and losing high cards are distributed.

Fast Arrival to “The Law level.” Modern bidding systems are replete with ways to show a 9-card fit. This trend is driven by The Law. As soon as we know that we have 9 trumps, we want to be able to bid at the 3-level as quickly as possible. Assume, for example, on the hand above,

that North opens 1♠. West passes. Should South be content with bidding 2♠...hoping to buy the contract there...knowing that he can bid 3♠ later if necessary? Or should South leap to 3♠ directly, trying to shut the opponents out? I used to espouse the former view (preferring to temporize with 2♠), but the more I play, the more I jump to “The Law level” as soon as I possibly can. Try it with your favorite partner, and let me know what you conclude.

### **Constructive Raises (Mark Oettinger)**

I like to use “Constructive Raises” after a 1st or 2nd seat opening bid. The *standard* meaning of 1M - P - 2M is 3-card (or longer) support and 5+ to 10- dummy points. That’s a very broad range, and it would be nice for responder to have a way to more narrowly describe his hand for opener. If you play “2 Over 1 Forcing to Game,” along with a “Forcing 1NT,” you can draw the following distinction:

1M - P - 2M...

...is a “constructive simple raise.” In other words, it shows the top half of the standard “simple raise” range. That translates to roughly 8-10 “dummy” points... HCPs plus distribution points. Whereas,

1M P    1NT P  
2X P    2M...

...is a “weak simple raise,” showing 5-7 dummy points. I prefer a structure in which the weak simple raise may be used with either 2-card or 3-card trump support. With the latter sequence available, opener will be less likely to initiate a game try with insufficient values. This, in



turn, increases the frequency with which we will be in 2♠ making 2, earning +110, and decreases the frequency with which we will be in 3♥ down 1, losing either -50 or -100.

Note that these sequences are only “on” after 1 of a *Major* suit opening bid, since notrump responses to 1 of a *Minor* are simply point-showing, and typically deny that responder has a 4-card Major.

Also, if you play that “1NT Forcing” is *off* when responder is a passed hand (as I generally do), that means that Constructive Raises are likewise off after a 3rd-seat or 4th-seat opening bid. This treatment condemns responder to a highly ambiguous 5+ - 10- dummy points when the auction goes”

|    |       |    |    |    |
|----|-------|----|----|----|
|    | P     | P  | 1♠ | P  |
|    | 2♠... |    |    |    |
| or |       |    |    |    |
|    | P     | P  | P  | 1♠ |
|    | P     | 2♠ |    |    |

This leads me to wonder whether I should play 1NT forcing (or perhaps semi-forcing) in all seats, in order to preserve our ability to differentiate between “weak” and “constructive” simple raises. I would appreciate (and will report upon) feedback from readers who have particularly notable experiences using either method.

### **One-Suit Game Tries & Two-Suit Game Tries (Mark Oettinger)**

You pick up the following hand:

♠xx  
 ♥AKQxx  
 ♦xx  
 ♣KJxx

You open 1♥. For once, your opponents are silent. Partner raises you to 2♥. Do you pass, or do you feel that it's worthwhile to explore game? You have found a fit, you have a well-concentrated 13 HCP. Adding a point for the 5th Heart, and a point for each of the doubletons, you're up to 16 "total points." From a different perspective, you have a 6-loser hand, while the typical 13HCP opener has 7 losers. For both reasons, it seems right to make a game try, if you have the right bidding tools.

Consider adding One-Suit Game Tries (OSGTs) and Two-Suit Games Tries (TSGTs) to your arsenal of major suit sequences. A One-Suit Game Try is essentially a "Help-Suit Game Try." Here's a typical example:

1♠            2♠  
 3♣/♦/♥...

Opener's rebid shows help/honors needed in just ONE of the 3 side suits...the one bid.

Similarly,

1♥            2♥  
 3♣/♦/♥...

is a OSGT, with responder's rebid of 3♥ being a OSGT in Spades (the impossible suit).

On the hand above, the auction would go as follows:

1♥ 2♥  
3♣...

And responder would accept the invitation *with* well-fitting values (i.e., help/honors in Clubs), or would decline the invitation by bidding 3♥ *without* help/honors in Clubs.

A *Two-Suit Game Try* advertises help/honors needed in *two* of the three non-trump suits, with a hand such as the following:

♠KQxxx  
♥xx  
♦KJx  
♣KJx

1♥ 2♥  
2♠ (relay to 2NT) 2NT (forced)  
3♣/3♦/3♥...

shows help/honors needed in BOTH suits NOT bid (with 3♥ excluding Spades),

and...

|                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| 1 ♠                            | 2 ♠ |
| 2N (relay to 3 ♣) 3 ♣ (forced) |     |
| 3 ♦ / 3 ♥ / 3 ♠ ...            |     |

shows help/honors needed in BOTH suits NOT bid (with 3 ♠ excluding Clubs).


For example, the last hand above would be bid as follows:

|                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| 1 ♠                            | 2 ♠ |
| 2N (relay to 3 ♣) 3 ♣ (forced) |     |
| 3 ♥ ...                        |     |

Showing help/honors to be “working” in Diamonds and Clubs, but to be “wasted” in Hearts.

The same system is used after 1M-1NT(Forcing)-2x-2M...if opener has suitable values (including 6 cards in his Major and invitational values).

Here’s a hand that came up at the July 2019 Manchester, Vermont sectional:

| <p>♠ QJ2<br/>♥ Q10<br/>♦ A3<br/>♣ 765432</p> <p>♠ K764<br/>♥ J54<br/>♦ K107<br/>♣ KQJ</p> <p>♠ A10853<br/>♥ AK62<br/>♦ Q94<br/>♣ 8</p> |  | <p>♠ 9<br/>♥ 9873<br/>♦ J8652<br/>♣ A109</p> | <p>Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠<sup>1</sup></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2NT<sup>2</sup></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♣<sup>3</sup></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠<sup>4</sup></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠<sup>4</sup></td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><sup>1</sup>Constructive raise (8-10, 3 card support)<br/><sup>2</sup>Initiates Two-Suit Game Try (forces 3♣)<br/><sup>3</sup>Forced<br/><sup>4</sup>Requesting help/honors in Diamonds and Hearts (not Clubs)<br/><sup>5</sup>I have both, and nothing wasted in Clubs!</p> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |  |  |  | 1♠ | Pass | 2♠ <sup>1</sup> | Pass | 2NT <sup>2</sup> | Pass | 3♣ <sup>3</sup> | Pass | 3♠ <sup>4</sup> | Pass | 4♠ <sup>4</sup> | All Pass |  |
|--|---|--|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|--|--|----|------|-----------------|------|------------------|------|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|-----------------|----------|--|
| <i>West</i>  | <i>North</i>  | <i>East</i>                                  | <i>South</i>   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |                 |      |                  |      |                 |      |                 |      |                 |          |  |
|  |   |  | 1♠   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |                 |      |                  |      |                 |      |                 |      |                 |          |  |
| Pass   | 2♠ <sup>1</sup>   | Pass   | 2NT <sup>2</sup>   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |                 |      |                  |      |                 |      |                 |      |                 |          |  |
| Pass   | 3♣ <sup>3</sup>   | Pass   | 3♠ <sup>4</sup>  |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |                 |      |                  |      |                 |      |                 |      |                 |          |  |
| Pass   | 4♠ <sup>4</sup>   | All Pass                                     |  |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |                 |      |                  |      |                 |      |                 |      |                 |          |  |


The EW hands are not exact, but the key elements are correct. I got a small Spade lead. The King of Diamonds was on my left, and when West won it, was able to lead another Spade away from his original holding of K764. The two Spade leads prevented me from ruffing both a Heart and a Diamond and scuttled an otherwise high-percentage 22 HCP game. An elegantly bid contract, and the only defense that could beat it. When I congratulated Mike Rogers for his choice of lead(s), he modestly replied that he didn't want to lead either of the two suits that I had advertised, and for which my partner had shown support, and he also did not want to lead away from his K109 of Clubs. That left Spades (trumps), and with K764, he was in the fortunate situation of being able to lead them twice without sacrificing a trick. Nicely done!

All Two-Suit Game Tries are alertable. So are One-Suit Game Tries where responder's rebid is 3 of our Major (showing the impossible suit). If you try this system, please let me know how you fare.

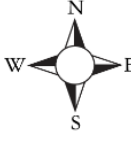
It is sometimes said that...  
 “One *bids* games, but one *explores* slams.”

### Play of the Hand - Another 10 Examples (Jerry Divincenzo)

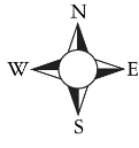
Just as with the last issue, the following 10 hands are gratefully reproduced, with Jerry’s permission. They were the pre-dealt practice hands from Part 3 of Jerry’s *Play of the Hand* series. Credit is also due, for the creation and delivery of this wonderful series of interactive events and their exceptional materials, to Patti DiVincenzo, Mary Tierney, Linda Kaleita and Ken Kaleita.

| <p style="text-align: center;">♠ Q5<br/>         ♥ QJ10<br/>         ♦ KQ1092<br/>         ♣ 876</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ K642<br/>         ♥ K9862<br/>         ♦ 73<br/>         ♣ QJ</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; align-items: center; margin: 10px 0;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ J107<br/>         ♥ 53<br/>         ♦ A854<br/>         ♣ 10943</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ A983<br/>         ♥ A74<br/>         ♦ J6<br/>         ♣ AK52</p> | <p>Board 1</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;"><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">3NT</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">All Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1NT</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Contract: 3NT<br/>         Opening lead: ♥6</p> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | Pass | 3NT | All Pass | 1NT |
|--|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------|-----|----------|-----|
| <i>West</i>  | <i>North</i>   | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |             |              |      |     |          |     |
| Pass   | 3NT  | All Pass    | 1NT          |             |              |      |     |          |     |


Declarer has 5 tricks: 1 Spade, 2 Hearts and 2 Clubs, and must develop tricks in Diamonds. Declarer must take the Ace of Hearts at trick one to assure a Heart entry to the dummy. Declarer forces out the Ace of Diamonds and takes 1 Spade, 2 Hearts, 4 Diamonds and 2 Clubs, for a total of 9 tricks.

| <p>♠ 85<br/>♥ 972<br/>♦ J643<br/>♣ K1092</p> <p>♠ Q42<br/>♥ QJ10<br/>♦ 952<br/>♣ 8763</p> <p>♠ AKJ1097<br/>♥ AK8<br/>♦ AKQ<br/>♣ A</p> |  | <p>♠ 63<br/>♥ 6543<br/>♦ 1087<br/>♣ QJ54</p> | <p>Board 2</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>6♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Contract: 6♠<br/>Opening lead: Queen of Hearts</p> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |  |  |  | 2♣ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass | 2♠ | Pass | 2NT | Pass | 6♠ | All Pass |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|--|--|----|------|----|------|----|------|-----|------|----|----------|--|--|--|
| <i>West</i>  | <i>North</i>  | <i>East</i>                                  | <i>South</i>   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |    |      |    |      |     |      |    |          |  |  |  |
|  |   |  | 2♣   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |    |      |    |      |     |      |    |          |  |  |  |
| Pass   | 2♦  | Pass   | 2♠   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |    |      |    |      |     |      |    |          |  |  |  |
| Pass   | 2NT   | Pass   | 6♠   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |    |      |    |      |     |      |    |          |  |  |  |
| All Pass   |   |  |  |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |    |      |    |      |     |      |    |          |  |  |  |

Declarer has 2 losers (1 Heart and 1 Spade), and would like to discard the Heart loser on the King of Clubs. Play the Ace of Clubs and the Jack of Spades. If West takes the Queen of Spades, win the return and use the 8 of Spades as an entry for the King of Clubs trick. If East does not take the Queen of Spades, play the Ace and King of Spades, resulting in no Spade losers and 1 Heart loser.

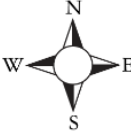
| <p>♠ 953<br/>♥ 954<br/>♦ AKQ42<br/>♣ 86</p> <p>♠ 872<br/>♥ AJ876<br/>♦ 10<br/>♣ A953</p> <p>♠ AKQ<br/>♥ K102<br/>♦ 9653<br/>♣ KJ7</p> |  | <p>♠ J1064<br/>♥ Q3<br/>♦ J87<br/>♣ Q1042</p> | <p>Board 3</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Contract: 3NT<br/>Opening Lead: ♥7</p> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |  |  |  | 1NT | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |  |
|---|---|---|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|--|--|-----|------|-----|----------|--|
| <i>West</i>   | <i>North</i>  | <i>East</i>                                   | <i>South</i>  |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |     |      |     |          |  |
|   |   |   | 1NT   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |     |      |     |          |  |
| Pass  | 3NT   | All Pass                                      |   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |     |      |     |          |  |

Declarer wins the King of Hearts, and has 9 tricks: 3 Spades, 1 Heart and 5 Diamonds, *but* declarer must play his three high Diamonds (the 9, 6 and 5) on the Ace, King and Queen of Diamonds in order to unblock the suit.


| <p>♠ 1096<br/>♥ 975<br/>♦ AKQ42<br/>♣ Q8</p> <p>♠ 87<br/>♥ A642<br/>♦ 10<br/>♣ AK9532</p> <p>♠ AKQJ2<br/>♥ K83<br/>♦ 9765<br/>♣ J</p> |  | <p>♠ 543<br/>♥ QJ10<br/>♦ J83<br/>♣ 10764</p> | <p>Board 4</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♣</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Contract: 4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Opening Lead: King of Clubs; then Ace of Clubs</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |  |  |  | 1♠ | 2♣ | 2♦ | Pass | 3♦ | Pass | 3♠ | Pass | 4♠ | All Pass |  |  |  | Contract: 4♠ |  |  |  | Opening Lead: King of Clubs; then Ace of Clubs |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|--|--|----|----|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|----------|--|--|--|--------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <i>West</i>   | <i>North</i>  | <i>East</i>                                   | <i>South</i>   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |    |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|   |   |   | 1♠   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |    |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2♣  | 2♦  | Pass  | 3♦   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |    |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pass  | 3♠  | Pass  | 4♠   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |    |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| All Pass  |   |   |  |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |    |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Contract: 4♠  |   |   |  |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |    |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Opening Lead: King of Clubs; then Ace of Clubs  |   |   |  |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |    |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Declarer has 5 Spades and 5 Diamonds except that the Diamond suit blocks. East is the danger hand (and will lead the Queen of Hearts if he gets on lead). To make the contract, the declarer must discard a Diamond on the Ace of Clubs. Only if West's hand leads a Heart will a single Heart loser be possible.




| <p>♠ J87<br/>♥ Q92<br/>♦ J5<br/>♣ AKQ32</p> <p>♠ KQ104<br/>♥ 65<br/>♦ 10942<br/>♣ 954</p> <p>♠ 963<br/>♥ AKJ103<br/>♦ A876<br/>♣ 7</p> |  | <p>♠ A52<br/>♥ 874<br/>♦ KQ3<br/>♣ J1086</p> | <p>Board 5</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Contract: 4♥<br/>Opening Lead: King of Spades</p> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |  |  |  | 1♥ | Pass | 2♣ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass | 4♥ | All Pass |  |
|--|---|--|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|--|--|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|----------|--|
| <i>West</i>  | <i>North</i>  | <i>East</i>                                  | <i>South</i>   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |          |  |
|  |   |  | 1♥   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |          |  |
| Pass   | 2♣  | Pass   | 2♦   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |          |  |
| Pass   | 4♥  | All Pass                                     |  |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |          |  |


Defenders take 3 Spades and switch to a Diamond. Declarer wins the Ace of Diamonds. Declarer has 9 tricks: 3 Clubs, 1 Diamond, and 5 Hearts. Declarer needs Hearts to be 3-2, and Clubs to be 4-3, which are likely splits for these two suits. Declarer takes two rounds of trump, leaving the Queen for a later entry. Declarer then plays a Club to the Ace, and trumps a low Club. Declarer gets back to the dummy with the Queen of Hearts and cashes the remaining Club winners. Note that if declarer takes 3 trumps prior to the Diamond play, he will only make 9 tricks (5 Hearts, 1 Diamond and 3 Clubs).

| <p>♠ A 7 6 5 2<br/>♥ K Q<br/>♦ 7 4 3<br/>♣ A 6 2</p> <p>♠ J 8 4 3<br/>♥ 9 3<br/>♦ K 10 2<br/>♣ J 10 9 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  </p> <p>♠ 10<br/>♥ A J 10 6 4 2<br/>♦ A Q 6<br/>♣ K Q 8</p> | <p>Board 6</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1 ♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2 ♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 ♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3 ♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4 ♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 ♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>6 ♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Contract: 6♥<br/>Opening lead: Jack of Clubs</p> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | 1 ♠ | Pass | 2 ♥ | Pass | 2 ♠ | Pass | 3 ♥ | Pass | 4 ♥ | Pass | 4NT | Pass | 5 ♠ | Pass | 6 ♥ | All Pass |
|---|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|----------|
| <i>West</i>   | <i>North</i>  | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |             |              |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |          |
| 1 ♠   | Pass  | 2 ♥         | Pass         |             |              |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |          |
| 2 ♠   | Pass  | 3 ♥         | Pass         |             |              |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |          |
| 4 ♥   | Pass  | 4NT         | Pass         |             |              |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |          |
| 5 ♠   | Pass  | 6 ♥         | All Pass     |             |              |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |      |     |          |

Declarer has 11 tricks: 1 Spade, 6 Hearts, 1 Diamond and 3 Clubs. Declarer needs to develop one more trick – the best approach is to set up a 5<sup>th</sup> Spade. Win the King of Clubs and lead the 10 of Spades to the Ace. Ruff a Spade, play a low Heart to the Queen, and ruff another Spade high. Lead to the King of Hearts and ruff another Spade high. Draw the remaining trump and lead 8 of Clubs to the Ace. Then play the last Spade, discarding the 6 of Diamonds. You are left with the Ace of Diamonds and the Queen of Clubs, for 12 tricks. If Spades are 5-2, you can resort to the Diamond finesse.

| <p>♠ Q1083<br/>♥ K10<br/>♦ 972<br/>♣ J852</p> <p>♠ AJ52<br/>♥ 54<br/>♦ K84<br/>♣ K1074</p> <p>♠ 94<br/>♥ AQJ862<br/>♦ AJ10<br/>♣ 63</p> |  | <p>♠ K76<br/>♥ 973<br/>♦ Q653<br/>♣ AQ9</p> | <p>Board 7</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dbl</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Contract: 2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Opening Lead: 4 of Clubs</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |  |  |  | 1♥ | Dbl | Pass | 1NT | 2♥ | All Pass |  |  |  | Contract: 2♥ |  |  |  | Opening Lead: 4 of Clubs |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|--|--|----|-----|------|-----|----|----------|--|--|--|--------------|--|--|--|--------------------------|--|--|--|
| <i>West</i>   | <i>North</i>  | <i>East</i>                                 | <i>South</i>   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |     |      |     |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                          |  |  |  |
|   |   |   | 1♥   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |     |      |     |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                          |  |  |  |
| Dbl   | Pass  | 1NT   | 2♥   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |     |      |     |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                          |  |  |  |
| All Pass  |   |   |  |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |     |      |     |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                          |  |  |  |
| Contract: 2♥  |   |   |  |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |     |      |     |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                          |  |  |  |
| Opening Lead: 4 of Clubs  |   |   |  |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |     |      |     |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                          |  |  |  |


East plays the Ace of Clubs, the Queen of Clubs and the 9 of Clubs. South trumps the third Club. Declarer has 7 tricks: 6 Hearts and 1 Diamond. Declarer can develop the second Diamond trick by leading twice toward the AJ10 of Diamonds, covering East's card each time. Declarer must delay drawing trumps and use the King and 10 of Hearts as entries. Declarer makes 6 Hearts and 2 Diamonds for 8 tricks.

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>♠ K74<br/>♥ 95<br/>♦ AK852<br/>♣ 752</p> <p>♠ Q1082<br/>♥ 1074<br/>♦ 103<br/>♣ QJ96</p> <p>♠ AJ3<br/>♥ AKQJ2<br/>♦ 74<br/>♣ AK3</p> |  | <p>♠ 965<br/>♥ 863<br/>♦ QJ96<br/>♣ 1084</p> | <p>Board 8</p> <p>Contract: 6♥</p> <p>Opening lead: Queen of Clubs</p> |
|--|---|--|--|

Declarer has 11 tricks: 2 Spades, 5 Hearts, 2 Diamonds and 2 Clubs and will need 3 Diamonds or the Spade finesse to make the contract. Win the Club lead and draw trump in three rounds. Duck a Diamond.

Playing the Ace and King of Diamonds and a Diamond ruff commits declarer to rely on a 3-3 Diamond break, while a 4-2 break is more likely.

Instead, declarer should duck a Diamond, win the Club return and play the Ace and King of Diamonds, discarding a Club, and ruff a Diamond to set up a 5<sup>th</sup> Diamond for a Spade discard.

| <p>♠ 64<br/>♥ Q75<br/>♦ KQ843<br/>♣ A102</p> <p>♠ K8753<br/>♥ 1094<br/>♦ 9<br/>♣ J976</p> <p>♠ AJ10<br/>♥ AKJ862<br/>♦ 10<br/>♣ KQ5</p> |  | <p>♠ Q92<br/>♥ 3<br/>♦ AJ7652<br/>♣ 843</p> | <p>Board 9</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>5♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>6♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Contract: 6♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Opening Lead: 9 of Diamonds</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |  |  |  | 1♥ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass | 3♥ | Pass | 4♥ | Pass | 4NT | Pass | 5♦ | Pass | 6♥ | All Pass |  |  |  | Contract: 6♥ |  |  |  | Opening Lead: 9 of Diamonds |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|--|--|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|-----|------|----|------|----|----------|--|--|--|--------------|--|--|--|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| <i>West</i>   | <i>North</i>  | <i>East</i>                                 | <i>South</i>  |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |     |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                             |  |  |  |
|   |   |   | 1♥  |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |     |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                             |  |  |  |
| Pass  | 2♦  | Pass  | 3♥  |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |     |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                             |  |  |  |
| Pass  | 4♥  | Pass  | 4NT   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |     |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                             |  |  |  |
| Pass  | 5♦  | Pass  | 6♥  |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |     |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                             |  |  |  |
| All Pass  |   |   |   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |     |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                             |  |  |  |
| Contract: 6♥  |   |   |   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |     |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                             |  |  |  |
| Opening Lead: 9 of Diamonds   |   |   |   |             |              |             |              |  |  |  |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |     |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                             |  |  |  |

Declarer has 11 tricks: 1 Spade, 6 Hearts, 1 Diamond and 3 Clubs. Since West led dummy's suit, it is likely a singleton, and East is marked to have the Ace and Jack of Diamonds. Since North has the KQ8 of Diamonds, two Diamond tricks can be developed. Duck the Diamond lead. East is likely to win the Jack and return a low Diamond. Ruff high, draw 3 rounds of trump, ending in the dummy, and lead the King of Diamonds. If East covers the King with the Ace of Diamonds, ruff.

Cross to the Ace of Clubs, and cash 2 Diamonds (discarding 2 Spades), for 12 tricks. If East doesn't cover the King with the Ace of Diamonds, let it go and pitch a Spade. Then lead the Queen of Diamonds and ruff if East covers with the Ace.

| <p>♠ 32<br/>♥ 74<br/>♦ AKQ<br/>♣ KJ7532</p> <p>♠ 9654<br/>♥ 9<br/>♦ J975<br/>♣ AQ106</p> <p>♠ 7<br/>♥ AQJ1083<br/>♦ 642<br/>♣ 984</p> <p>♠ AKQJ108<br/>♥ K652<br/>♦ 1083<br/>♣ -</p> | <p>Board 10</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Contract: 4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Opening Lead: 9 of Hearts</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |  | 1♣ | 2♥ | 2♠ | Pass | 3♣ | Pass | 4♠ | All Pass |  |  |  | Contract: 4♠ |  |  |  | Opening Lead: 9 of Hearts |  |  |  |
|--|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|----|----|----|------|----|------|----|----------|--|--|--|--------------|--|--|--|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| <i>West</i>  | <i>North</i>  | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |             |              |  |    |    |    |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                           |  |  |  |
|  | 1♣  | 2♥          | 2♠           |             |              |  |    |    |    |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                           |  |  |  |
| Pass   | 3♣  | Pass        | 4♠           |             |              |  |    |    |    |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                           |  |  |  |
| All Pass   |   |             |              |             |              |  |    |    |    |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                           |  |  |  |
| Contract: 4♠   |   |             |              |             |              |  |    |    |    |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                           |  |  |  |
| Opening Lead: 9 of Hearts  |   |             |              |             |              |  |    |    |    |      |    |      |    |          |  |  |  |              |  |  |  |                           |  |  |  |

Declarer has 10 tricks: 6 Spades, 3 Diamonds and 1 Heart. The King of Hearts is a trick unless it is trumped. The solution is to duck the Queen of Hearts and Jack of Hearts (West will trump the Jack of Hearts). Win the return, draw trump, and take the King of Hearts....*having saved it from being trumped!*

## Upcoming Vermont Tournaments

President's Cup

Location TBD

August 18, 2019 (tentative)

Vermont Sectional

Burlington Bridge Club

600 Blair Park Road  
Williston, Vermont  
September 13, 14 & 15, 2019

Vermont Sectional  
Quechee Base Lodge  
3277 Quechee Main Street  
Quechee, Vermont  
October 25, 26 & 27, 2019

0-500 MPs; Non-Life Master Sectional  
Burlington Bridge Club  
600 Blair Park Road  
Williston, VT  
January 25, 2020

Vermont Sectional  
Burlington Bridge Club  
600 Blair Park Road  
Williston, Vermont  
May 15, 16 & 17, 2020

Vermont Sectional  
Battenkill Eagles  
2282 Depot Street  
Manchester, Vermont  
July 10, 11 & 12, 2020

Vermont Sectional  
Burlington Bridge Club  
600 Blair Park Road  
Williston, Vermont  
September 11, 12 & 13, 2020

Vermont Sectional

Quechee Base Lodge  
3277 Quechee Main Street  
Quechee, Vermont  
October 30, 31 & November 1, 2020

## **Vermont and Nearby Clubs**

### **Lyndonville Bridge Club**

**Cobleigh Library**  
**14 Depot Street**  
**Lyndonville, Vermont 05851**  
**Jeanie Clermont; (802) 684-2156**  
**Saturday, 1:00 p.m.; semi-monthly; stratified**

### **Manchester Equinox Village Open**

**49 Maple Street**  
**Manchester, Vermont 05254**  
**Elizabeth VonRiesenfelder; (802) 362-5304**  
**Tuesday; 1:00 p.m.; 0-200 MPs**  
**Tuesday; 1:00 p.m.; open, stratified**  
**Sunday; 2:00 p.m.; February, March; open; stratified**  
*Multiple sites; call first; reservations requested*

### **Taconic Card Club**

**6025 Main Street**  
**Manchester, Vermont 05255**  
**Kim Likakis; (802) 379-1867**  
**Thursday; 12:30 p.m.; open; reservations requested**

### **Apollo Bridge Club**

**115 Main Street**  
**Montpelier, Vermont 05602**  
**Wayne Hersey; (802) 223-3922**  
**Friday; 6:30 p.m.; open**

## **Newport Club**

**84 Fyfe Street**

**Newport Center, Vermont 05855**

**Eric McCann; (802) 988-4773**

**Wednesday; 1:00 p.m.; exc. Jan, May, Oct, Nov, Dec; open; stratified**

## **Barton Bridge Club**

**34 School Street**

**Orleans, Vermont 05860**

**Linda Aiken; (802) 525-4617**

**Monday; 12:30 p.m.; open; stratified**

## **Rutland Duplicate Bridge Club**

**66 South Main Street**

**Christ the King Church**

**Rutland, Vermont 05701**

**Raymond Lopes; (802) 779-2538**

**Monday, 12:00 Noon; open; stratified**

**Tuesday; 6:00 p.m.; open; stratified**

**Thursday; 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. (*time changes seasonally...call first*); open; stratified**

***Multiple sites - call first for locations***

## **St. Albans DBC**

**75 Messenger Street**

**St. Albans, Vermont 05478**

**Marsha Anstey; (802) 524-3653**

**Monday; 7:00 p.m.; open**

## **Burlington Bridge Club**

**600 Blair Park Road**

**Williston, Vermont 05495**

**Phil Sharpsteen; (802) 999-7767**

**Monday; 6:30 p.m.; 0-500 MPs; stratified**

**Tuesday; 7:00 p.m.; open; stratified (call first November-April)**



**Wednesday; 9:15 a.m.; open; stratified**

**Wednesday; 1:30 p.m. 0-20 MPs; strat'd; *may resume Fall; pre-reg. & part. req'd***

**Friday; 9:15 a.m.; open; stratified**

**Sunday; 1PM; open; semi-mo. exc. May, June, July, Aug; strat.; *call/check web***

**Website: [www.bridgewebs.com/burlingtonacademy/](http://www.bridgewebs.com/burlingtonacademy/)**

## **Norwich DBC**

**43 Lebanon Street**

**Hanover, New Hampshire 03755**

**Paul Hoisington; (802) 249-0839**

**hoise430@gmail.com**

**Tuesday; 6:30 p.m.; open; stratified**

## **Quechee Duplicate Bridge Club**

**Quechee Club**

**3268 Quechee Main Street**

**Quechee, Vermont 05059**

**Karen Randle; (802) 225-6640; [klhewitt9@gmail.com](mailto:klhewitt9@gmail.com)**

**Monday; 1:00 p.m.; open; stratified**

## **Eastman Bridge Club**

**48 Lebanon Street Street, Hanover, NH (Wednesday at 1:00 + Friday at 1:00)**

**6 Club House Lane, Grantham, NH (Tuesday at 12:30)**

**Jane Verdrager; (603) 865-5508**

**Website: [www.eastmanbridgeclub.com](http://www.eastmanbridgeclub.com)**

## **Keene DBC**

**Elks Lodge**

**81 Roxbury Street**

**Keene, New Hampshire 03431**

**Anne McCune; (603) 352-2751**

**Monday; 12:00 Noon; open; stratified (partner available)**

**Thursday; 12:00 Noon; open; stratified (no partner guaranteed)**

## **Ticonderoga (New York) DBC**

**109 Champlain Avenue  
Ticonderoga, New York 12883  
Michael Rogers; (518) 585-3322  
Monday; 12:30 p.m.; open; stratified; reservations requested  
Thursday; 12:30 p.m.; open; stratified; reservations requested**

### **Plattsburgh (New York) DBC**

**5139 North Catherine Street  
Plattsburgh, New York 12901  
George Cantin; (518) 563-6639  
Tuesday; 6:45 p.m.; open; handicap  
Thursday; 6:45 p.m.; open  
Friday; 12:30 p.m.; open**

### **Useful & Fun Links**

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>ACBL</b>                        | <a href="http://www.acbl.org"><u>www.acbl.org</u></a>   |
| <b>District 25</b>                 | <a href="http://www.nebridge.org"><u>www.nebridge.org</u></a>   |
| <b>Unit 175</b>                    | <a href="http://www.vermontbridge.org"><u>www.vermontbridge.org</u></a>   |
| <b>Bridge Base Online</b>          | <a href="http://www.bridgebase.com"><u>www.bridgebase.com</u></a>   |
| <b>OKBridge</b>                    | <a href="http://www.okbridge.com"><u>www.okbridge.com</u></a>   |
| <b>Bridge Guys</b>                 | <a href="http://www.bridgeguys.com"><u>www.bridgeguys.com</u></a>   |
| <b>Pattaya Bridge Club</b>         | <a href="http://www.pattayabridge.com"><u>www.pattayabridge.com</u></a>   |
| <b>Larry Cohen</b>                 | <a href="http://www.larryco.com"><u>www.larryco.com</u></a>   |
| <b>Mike Lawrence</b>               | <a href="https://michaelslawrence.com/"><u>https://michaelslawrence.com/</u></a>  |
| <b>Marty Bergen</b>                | <a href="http://www.martybergen.com"><u>www.martybergen.com</u></a>   |
| <b>Baron Barclay Bridge Supply</b> | <a href="http://www.baronbarclay.com"><u>www.baronbarclay.com</u></a>   |
| <b>Michael's Bridge Sanctuary</b>  | <a href="http://www.mapiano.com/bridge.htm"><u>www.mapiano.com/bridge.htm</u></a>                                       |
| <b>Power Rankings</b>              | <a href="http://www.coloradospringsbridge.com/PR_FILES/PR.HTM"><u>www.coloradospringsbridge.com/PR_FILES/PR.HTM</u></a> |